

MIRE END RESIDENTS PETITION 3 CANALS AGAIN !

In further efforts to have Mire End recognised as part of the Three Canals Metropolitan Area, a residents group presented another plea to the Authority. Travelling on foot to the Grand Chambers, eight locals once again set the case of Mire End before the lawmakers of the TCMAA.

Mire End representative Tjeri Holsten said: "All we're looking for is equal rights and services. There're good people round our way who deserve a chance. We just want a chance to show that we can be a part of the TCMA."

There were ugly scenes at the Grand Chambers as representatives attempted to gain access. This reporter witnessed Provosts using considerable force to disperse what was a small and mainly peaceful group. Provost commander on the spot, Lyn Burnard, stated: "Several non-TCMA residents attempted to gain access by force to the Grand Hall. We used acceptable force to keep them out". When asked if shooting one of the group was reasonable force, Provost Burnard said: "No comment."

Undaunted by their experience, the group returned to Mire End vowing to carry on the protest. Holsten said: "My mother and father, my grandparents, they all protested before me. I'll carry on until we get the recognition we deserve."

An Exclusive by

Anon Supporter

FIREBOMB KILLS NINE

Local residents were placed in a state of fear and alarm when popular cellar pub 'The Newmarket Bar' was fire-bombed. Reliable witnesses state that three firebombs were thrown into the bar in quick succession. In the ensuing chaos, nine patrons died.

This is the third such incident in recent weeks. Suspicions of increased rivalry between local 3rd Syndicate and Hohler Gang interests have been rife.

NEW PROVOST COMMANDER APPOINTED TO FOLLY HILLS

In a surprise move from the TCMA Provosts, a new commander has been appointed to Folly Hills. Provost Captain Illyin Japarov arrived in Folly Hills today to take up his new appointment.

Known for his hardline approach in dealing with street crime, Japarov has the full backing of the Provosts and the TCMA in making Folly Hills a safer place to live. "I've no compunctions about using all means necessary to crush criminal elements and keep the good people of Folly Hills safe."

When questioned about the Mire End situation, Captain Japarov stated he would "not be averse" to

taking patrols into Mire End in the search for criminal elements. When pressed to reveal if this meant that Mire End would receive regular Provost assistance, he replied: "No."

By Victor Dammers

TICKTOCK MAN STRIKES AGAIN!

Bloody murder stained the waters of the Green Canal once more as crazed serial killer Ticktock Man struck again. Canal traders found another horrifically mutilated body, bearing all the hallmarks of Ticktock Man, just south of the Mire End/Folly Hills ferry.

Provosts were quickly on the scene but confessed to having no further leads in a case which has dragged on for years. "I'm bloody baffled," said Provost Guarnere, a sentiment echoed by several of his colleagues.

Local lostfinder Janus Kripitsch, who has been following the progress of the Ticktock Man case, also admitted to being thoroughly confused. "It's a confusing case. It would seem that Ticktock Man is deliberately baiting us, yet we can't piece the clues together. I just wonder how many more people will die?"

Regular readers will already be aware of the horrific nature of Ticktock Mans crimes and the editors feel that further descriptions of their sickening brutality are quite un-necessary.

WIN A MEAL!
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FACES IN THE CROWD

TICKTOCK MAN

A legend in the Three Canals, a story used to frighten children, a vicious killer, a black hole in the urban warren. Ticktock Man is all these things and more. For years the Provosts, vigilantes, hired guns and macrocorporate investigators have tried to track down one of the most famous serial killers in The City. All have met with abject failure or ignominious death. The true number of killings carried out by Ticktock Man is unknown, as many murders are attributed to him. The actual number will never be known, but conservative estimates put it in the high tens, possibly over one hundred.

The brutality of this famed killer's crimes are shocking, even by the violence-numbed standards of The City. Tracking through the spirals and fractals of Ticktocks Man's killing spree has driven more than one hapless investigator to the edge of madness. Sometimes they fall off the edge. Respected, for a while revered, Provost Saskia Nordenholtz now resides in Inferno as Inmate 490341, her mind snapped by the Ticktock Man investigation, her body left as a drooling, gibbering husk, living out her days squatting in her own filth and cackling at dust motes.

Ticktock Man's name comes from the only contact the killer has ever had with investigators. After the first few killings, a note was delivered to First Citizen Gorecki. This was unusual in that the note was not delivered by any individual and seemed to simply appear on the First Citizen's desk. Another, rather disturbing, feature of the note delivery, was the nature of the paper on which it was written. What was unusual about the paper has never been disclosed. However, part of the message which referred to "the tick tock of a giant clock" leaked out, hence the name applied to Tick Tock Man.

Whoever can crack the Ticktock Man case will be rich, famous and adored. However, it is a dangerous trail to follow. Those who have come close to the heart of the case have wound up dead or insane. Very few individuals wish to delve into the murky world of Ticktock Man. The wise know that some things are best left alone.

PROVOST COMMANDER ILLIYAN JAPAROV



Age: 37

Height: 5' 9"

Weight:

Eyes: Grey

Hair: Grey/Black

Affiliations: TCMAA Provosts. Mortal God Church (Godless Incursors faction).

A hard, hard man, Japarov is uncompromising in his attitude towards crime. Every area he has worked in within the TCMA has experienced a drop in crime, often a substantial drop. Some would argue that this has come at the cost of civil liberties, others argue the price is well worth paying.

Japarov is not for his tolerance of criminal activity of any kind, from the most petty cutpurse, right up to the activities of the Third Syndicate. His methods are sometimes described as repressive, even brutal,

yet none can argue that his tactics are not effective in the extreme.

Growing up in the moderately comfortable burgh of Coldbath Fell, Japarov did not suffer the privations and hardship of the common populace during his childhood. Yet, for some reason, he developed a deep seated hatred of crime and criminals. Those who have delved into his past find no particular reason for this. He was happy as a child, loved by his parents and siblings and did not undergo any particular traumas which have skewed his judgement. Despite this, at age 16 he joined the Provosts in order to pursue his desire for law and order.

To say that he rose through the ranks quickly would be a gross understatement. His determination, talents and ruthless application of the law were rapidly recognised by his superiors. Sticking absolutely to the letter of TCMAA law, he still managed to instill an sense of fear in criminals. Feted by the local press, admired by the moneyed classes and respected by all within the Provosts, Japarov seemed destined for the top. Destined for the top, it seemed, until he hit something of a glass ceiling.

Such is his zeal, fame and ruthlessness, many of the more senior and more corrupt members of the Provosts now fear their prodigy turning his sights on them. For Japarov despises lawlessness of any kind, especially within the Provosts themselves. He is known to administer harsh 'corrective punishment' to men under his command who are found to be corrupt in any way.

Senior commanders hope that, by giving him one of the toughest possible assignments, the cleaning up of Folly Hills, that he will fail ignominiously, be pilloried by the press and fall upon his own sword. If this is what they think, then they seriously underestimate the man. Japarov is on a mission to clean up the streets as best he can, even if it means personally rounding up every criminal he can law his hands on.

Folly Hills is in for a shock.

FROM THE GROUNDS

Welcome to the the first issue of 'The Mire End Tribune', our regular newsletter offering news from Contested Ground Studios, a/state game information, NPCs, new info on The City, gear and mini adventures. The "Tribune" will be available six times a year, with occasional "special issues" (more on them in future editions).

Once a/state is launched (or even after a/stateLite is available, if you feel particularly inspired), we'd really like the "Tribune" to become a forum for GMs and players contributions. If you have an NPC, a place in The City, an item of technology, even an adventure or adventure seed, feel free to send it to us at info@contestedground.co.uk. You'll receive full credit for any contributions and the dubious pleasure of seeing your work in print!

Save Your Screen

As you may (or may not) have noticed, an a/state screensaver is available for download on the CGS website. Featuring art from the game, this will make a handsome addition to any home computer. Amaze your friends, irritate your family, get an a/state screensaver.

a/stateLite

As you'll probably know, a/stateLite is now available as a 62 page PDF. Offering the ideal introduction to the world of a/state, Lite offers basic background, details on The City, simplified rules, and introductory adventure and pre-generated characters.

Real a/state!

Coming in October/November! Yes, honest, it is!

Mailing List

Join the a/state mailing list and be notified as soon as anything happens. Obviously, this only relates to stuff involving CGS and a/state. I mean, if your car is stolen, you can't expect us to tell you about it. To join the list, go to the 'Links' page on the CGS website and click on the 'a/state mailing list' link.

Thanks

Thanks go to Matthew Barrowcliffe who paid £200 in the Compulsion 2002 Grand Charity Auction for copy 0001 of a/state and Brian Pickles who paid £100 in the same auction for a limited edition print of a piece of art from the game. Other thanks to Mark, who paid £106 at the DrakCon 2002 auction for a limited edition print. Cheers lads!

FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE

Each issue, 'For Your Viewing Pleasure' will bring you an adventure nugget, short adventure or series of ideas for use with a/state. The first of these is given below, a horrific murder with a whole host of possibilities....

Strange Little Girl

Finding a dismembered body in the Green Canal is not all that unusual an occurrence for the citizens of Mire End and Folly Hills. However, a carefully wrapped, dismembered body of a young girl is a different matter. As the Provosts refuse to investigate (citing the fact that the corpse was found on the Mire End side of the canal),

the characters are drawn in to a web of intrigue. This particular adventure nugget is ideally suited to parties who have a Lostfinder in their midst, as they are likely to be approached by some of the more kind hearted Mire End citizens. Alternatively, the body could give rise to tensions between local criminal elements, vicious rumours on the street accusing various parties. One of the more influential organisations (perhaps the Hohler Gang) may wish to settle this once and for all and approach 'outside interests' (i.e.: the party) to clear things up.

The body is that of a young scrape addict and prostitute named Eloise Huyten. She was killed by her parents, one of whom is under the influence of a Drache. Her father is an immensely fat man, who is only able to walk by means of heavy crutches and extensive leg braces. Her mother is an emaciated, haggard harriidan of a woman, constantly screeching and screaming. Together they run a second hand clothes store in Folly Hills, a store which also does a profitable sideline in pornography of the more depraved kind.

There are various elements involved here: the girls parent's, local organised crime elements, local gangs, the Provosts, the girl's boyfriend and even the semi-legendary serial killer, Ticktock Man. Who is ultimately responsible for the killing is up to the GM. Possible reasons for the killing include:

Parents: The possession by the Drache causes bizarre and unreasonable acts, including murder. Mr Huyten lives in constant fear of his wife (he doesn't actually know she's possessed, he just thinks she's mad).

Organised Crime/Gangs: The reasons could run the gamut from not paying for drugs to passing information to the provosts or another gang/organisation.

Boyfriend: In a fit of drug induced rage, he may have killed the girl and then dismembered the body and dumped it in the canal in an effort to conceal his crime. Then again, she may have died accidentally, he panicked and tried to cover it up.

The Provosts: If the girl attempted to ply her trade in Folly Hills, certain of the more militant Provosts may have killed her and tried to make it look like a gang or serial killer crime. Such acts are not unknown, and while the Provosts do not actively encourage the 'removal' of 'undesirable elements', such acts are not investigated with undue haste.

Ticktock Man: Ticktock Man has absolutely nothing at all to do with this case, but provides a useful red herring, so to speak.

THE WORKSHOP

Each issue 'The Workshop' will give you lucky people a new bit of technology from The City, insights into how things work and various other tech-related crap.

Gallowglass 'Fearless' Revolver

Manufactured by Abelard Gallowglass & Sons, a gunsmiths of some repute, the 'Fearless' is truly a thing to behold. Most sparklocks have a reputation for being slow, inaccurate and clumsy. The 'Fearless' goes some way to resolving the first two shortcomings, if not the third. In essence, it is a seven shot sparklock revolver of relatively simple design. However, it is the way in which Abelard Gallowglass has integrated some novel features which makes the 'Fearless' almost unique. Firstly, the gun is semi-automatic. This is achieved through the use of a rugged clockwork mechanism under the barrel which rotates the cylinder after each shot. In front of this mechanism (at the muzzle end of the weapon) is the large capacitor which provides the power to fire the rounds from the gun.

In another interesting feature, the clockwork can be disengaged from the gun mechanism and used to power a tiny internal dynamo which recharges the capacitor. The ammunition cylinder itself can also be completely removed and replaced with a freshly loaded specimen.

But the 'Fearless' also has one last trick up its sleeve: its dingin powered sighting mechanism. Manufactured by Abelard's brother Everard, the dingin itself is a tiny microscale unit of high quality and craftsmanship. It draws its power from the clockwork mechanism and a series of miniature brass buttons and dials inset into its surface allow for programming. Users are given a (handwritten) list of codes which allow them to programme the weapon to take account of different ammunition, propellant loads and even whether or not it is raining or foggy. Then comes the clever bit.

When aiming at a target, the user looks through a large, upright rectangular sight mounted towards the rear of the weapon. Then they use a small ratchet mechanism inlaid into the butt to bracket the target with two parallel bars, one aligning with the head, the other aligning with the feet. Then the dingin takes over. Taking the average height of a man as its baseline, the dingin computes the rough range to the target and adjusts the bars up or down accordingly. The user simply needs to keep the target bracketed by the bars, pull the trigger and the target is hit. The dingin can also be set for large or small targets, according to the situation.

Caliber: 0.55

Damage: 13

Penetration: 11

Range: 10

ROF: 1

Reaction Mod: -5

Clip: 7 round cylinder

Weight: 31lbs

Cost: £100

AN A/STATE GLOSSARY

Given that a/state hasn't been released yet, some of the terms used in this issue of The Mire End Tribune may be unfamiliar to you. So here's a rough and ready guide to some of the more obscure terms...

Dingin: A mechanical computer. Can be macroscale (large, visible components), microscale (components can be seen with a powerful magnifying glass) or nanoscale (components can only be seen through the most powerful microscopes).

Provost: A member of the police force of the Three Canals Metropolitan Area.

Sparklock: A common, primitive muzzle loading firearm using capacitors or superconductors scavenged from hitech sources to electrically ignite a charge of propellant.

CREDITS

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Go on, get your name here! If you'd like to contribute a news story, something for 'Faces In The Crowd', 'The Workshop', 'For Your Viewing Pleasure' or 'Round & About', then get in touch with us. We won't nick your ideas (honest!) and you'll get full credit for anything published. Go on, what's the worst that could happen?